

Acts 11:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Analysis

Luke reports: 'the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.' The 'hand of the Lord' signifies divine power and blessing on their ministry. The twofold response - believing and turning - describes conversion: faith in the gospel and repentance toward God. The 'great number' shows God's sovereign election extends to many among the Gentiles. Reformed theology sees effective calling here - the Spirit working through gospel preaching to grant faith and repentance to the elect. Human preaching is instrumental; God's power is effectual.

Historical Context

This Gentile harvest in Antioch circa AD 40-42 established the church that would send Paul and Barnabas on missionary journeys (Acts 13:1-3). Antioch became the center of Gentile Christianity, rivaling Jerusalem's role as center of Jewish Christianity.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does the 'hand of the Lord' being with preachers accomplish that human effort alone cannot?
2. How does this passage demonstrate that both faith and repentance are necessary for salvation?
3. Why does successful evangelism always indicate God's sovereign work, not merely human technique?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἦν	χεὶρ	κύριον	μετ'	αὐτῶν	πολύς	τε	ἀριθμὸς
And	was	the hand	of the Lord	with	them	a great	and	number
G2532	G2258	G5495	G2962	G3326	G846	G4183	G5037	G706
πιστεύσας	ἐπέστρεψεν	ἐπὶ	τὸν	κύριον				
believed	and turned	unto	G3588	of the Lord				
G4100	G1994	G1909		G2962				

Additional Cross-References

Acts 2:47 (References Lord): Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Luke 1:66 (References Lord): And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Isaiah 59:1 (References Lord): Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

Acts 9:35 (References Lord): And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 (Parallel theme): For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

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